AU4H Radio Presents Our Introduction and Current Events

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Participants: Lee Roberts, Donna Kshir, Laurie Ann Smith
Show link HERE

Laurie Ann Smith –

Hello everyone! I am excited to be here tonight, and I'm here with my sister advocates, Lee Roberts and Donna Kshir and we've been best friends for a long time, and worked together for a long time on many different projects. So this is exciting and we're glad to be here. This is basically our first show for Advocates United for Humanity Radio, AU4H Radio, and we're just going to do a bit of an introduction, we're going to just tell you a little bit about ourselves, and we are going to talk about some past events as well as some, sort of, new, current and future events that are coming up right now with Advocates United for Humanity, we just call it AU4H. So, we are glad that you can be here and join us. We want you just to feel comfortable. We're all best friends, so we hang out online all the time, but we're all over the North American continent. Lee Roberts, she is in Florida, Donna Kshir, she is in Pennsylvania, and I'm in Canada. But we all met in person and we have met in the past and we've been best friends for a long, long time. So we want you to feel comfortable too, and you know, just join us and grab a coffee. Lee Roberts; she's got her coffee, I've got mine. You know, grab a cuppa, pull up a chair. Donna's got hers. Join us in the chat. We will be checking the YouTube chat and if you have a question for us or you want information about something we're doing or you just want to know more about us you can click the links below. Right now is a good time, if you haven't to subscribe to our channel and click the like button. Share this all over the place. We need help. We are a new channel here on YouTube, and we need help to get this spread out to everybody. We are going to do a weekly show and it should be about this time on Wednesday evening, you can check the event schedule coming up. We're just glad to be here and I'm extremely happy to be back with my sister advocates. What I'm gonna do, is take a moment and we are going to introduce ourselves. Just give me one sec here, I'm going to let Lee, Lee Roberts, she is going to introduce herself to us right now, and I'll let Lee go ahead and tell us a little bit more, tell you, I know a lot about Lee, we all do, we're best friends. Lee can tell you about herself.

Lee Roberts-

Hi everyone, I'm Co-founder of Advocates United for Humanity, and CEO. This is an interesting format for me personally to work on because I'm Deaf. I can speak. I started my journey to deafness when I was five with a near fatal bout with meningitis; but more about that in the future. Advocates United for Humanity I co-founded with one of my best friends, and sister advocate Donna Kshir, who you see down there (pointing down). In June 2015, 2016, we came up with the idea in November 2015. We've been advocates before and worked together and volunteered side by side and ended up on different journeys. We came back and advocated strongly again for children together, as well as other causes in the communities, like homelessness, for me personally, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community is really important, because it is a community that there are so many of us out there, that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community doesn't get reached, they get left out. We are working with this, our amazing radio program co-ordinator, and another dear friend and sister advocate Laurie Ann Smith has found this forum and is connected to YouTube, and while the captions are auto-generated and it is a way for us to at least start reaching the Deaf Community and we are going to work on refining that process so that we can

reach you better out there. I would sign and talk at the same time, but my brain gets confused doing two different languages. You may catch me throwing a few signs in there because that is a habit for me. Let's see, I was born to two parents who were in the Air Force, and my mother was a Registered Nurse and a Lieutenant. I was born down at Lackland, and raised back up in New England where my Momma's family is so, I was born without my twin, physically by my side, but she is with me on this journey. I'm a survivor of so much. Experiences I wouldn't wish on anybody. Laurie, who is very vocal about her past and her survival and what she's experienced, we have a lot in common and identical in part of our journey and both being survivors of a lot of abuse. There may be another show that I might talk a little bit more about that as we touch on certain topics of survivors and healing and our journeys. But, at this point, I'm the oldest of 6 kids, should have been 7 living kids, but like I said, my twin didn't make it. I'm the oldest of 6, and from a military and law enforcement family. My mother's brother is a long retired Officer from New England. I'm very proud of him; very proud of my Uncle Joe. There is just so much that I could share, but I'm going to turn this over now to Donna, down there, so, Donna up to you.

Donna Kshir-

My name is Donna Kshir, I'm a mom, a grandmom. I'm the Co-founder of Advocates United for Humanity. I serve as President on the Board of Directors. I'm a writer, publisher, editor; photographer. But my most important role is mom and grandma.

Laurie Smith-

That's awesome.

Donna Kshir-

They're my world.

Laurie Smith –

And that's a big responsibility too! That's a full time job on top of a full time job.

Donna Kshir-

You know how I am, they're my everything. My daughter just got married and I'm hoping that there will be more grandbabies real quick. Not that I'm pushing them or anything

Laurie Smith-

Yes, that's exciting. Alright, well that is excellent. Did you want me to go?

Donna Kshir –

Yes

Laurie Ann Smith-

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Okay, so it's my turn. My name is Laurie Ann Smith. I am AU4H Radio Program Co-ordinator. I just came back and joined AU4H. I was with them, well actually a long time ago back when they first started I was with them for at least a little bit and then I left, but I had a lot of stress going on in my life, and since this last, I don't know, I would say since, especially since 2010, so we are going back a ways, the last 10 year have been pretty stressful and I'd get involved with a group and then have to leave just because there was too much going on in my personal life. But I always loved to be a voice, you know, for children, and you know, to be a voice, and with Donna Kshir, Lee Roberts that's what we were able to do. We were volunteering with a different group at the time, that's where we met, and I met these lovely ladies, and we quickly became best friends, and it really just happened like kind of instantly, we just bonded and we could trust each other and we knew we had each other's back. We would always watch out for each other, because it's rare to find people like that these days. It really is. We just get along so well, and we kind of have of a main, you know, a main thing in common. We want protection for everybody, we think children should be protected, adults who are vulnerable should be protected; animals should be protected. We care about people, we care about children and we care about the world. A lot of people don't but we do, and I think that these ladies, our hearts are the same. That's kind of, you know, where we all got started years ago advocating on behalf of children, working towards child abuse prevention mainly. But I also did a lot my own stuff because I was abused as a child. People know me out there as the person who talks about her own personal journey and that's very true, because that's what I do. But, um, my husband just recently passed away, well two and half years ago, but to me it seems pretty recent. It hasn't been all that long and this was the third Christmas without him, and I finally put up a Christmas tree this year, and I hadn't done if for a few years because I was just too down. I'm starting to feel like I want to get back involved and Donna and Lee were nice enough to let me join them again as the AU4H Radio Program Coordinator, and so I'm extremely glad to be here tonight. To be able to be back with these ladies, like I said, we're back! We're glad to be back. We were always wanting to be a voice out here, and Donna and Lee have continued to be a voice out here with Advocates United for Humanity. I'm glad to join you ladies, my lovely friends and get busy again. That's what we are planning on doing.

Donna Kshir-

Laurie, we're blessed to have you. We are both happy that you're back. We are blessed. Lee and I just absolutely, you know, we think the world of you, we love you; we couldn't have done this without you.

Laurie Ann Smith-

Well, that's how I feel about you. I'm so thankful to be able to do this with you ladies. We just recently stumbled across this program that works with YouTube, or wherever, live streaming. You can live stream all over the place; we just chose our YouTube channel. Hopefully it works out for us. Radio is too hard because Lee is part of the Deaf Community and she can speak and talk but she can't hear. And so this will work for us to all be a voice for children still out here advocating . I think it's absolutely wonderful.

Donna Kshir-

It is.

Laurie Ann Smith-

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Well there is a need, you know. We see what's going on. That's not all we do at Advocates United for Humanity but that's a part of it. We see the headlines and we know what's happening out there. Children need a voice and they do need protection, that's for sure. Did you want to talk about some of the highlights, Donna, of AU4H and the website?

Donna Kshir-

Laurie, as you know at Advocates United for Humanity we focus on positive social change, we cover a variety of vital resources from bullying, animal cruelty, domestic violence, human trafficking, cyber-bullying, internet safety, we provide information for the Gay and Lesbian Community, the missing and also do youth support. These programs have been great. We have a lot of people that we really have helped. It's nice when you see all the work that you put into it, and then you see the outcome where so many people are benefiting from it. It's a good feeling to know you're helping people. We are a small group but we have some of the best ambassadors on the planet. There's my buddy, Otis. We have some of the best ambassadors that anyone could ask for. Like I said, we are a small group, but we are so blessed. I'm thankful, and I know Lee is thankful. We're both thankful and grateful that you're back. We missed you.

Laurie Ann Smith-

I'm glad to be back, I missed you too. I think that you guys were still going strong out there, doing the work you were doing and I was so happy to see that. Well, I just knew that you would, because this is how you are, and that's how I am. I have a heart to do as much as I can, to do what I can, I mean right now with Covid-19 we're kind of all online, there are some things people can do out here, that we'll be talking about in a few minutes, but right now we can do a lot online to reach people too. A lot of people are stuck at home. They need support too. Right, and I mean we're kind of isolated too, somewhat, we have to be careful until we find a vaccine that actually works. You know, it's tough. Advocates United for Humanity, to go to the website, our website is, my computer is so slow. It is AU4H.weebly.com. You can go there and click on the top that shows "About" and "Resources" and you can see all the different projects that are happening, the ones that have happened in the past, what's happening in the future. People can get information and it's very, very helpful. We'll be discussing some of that in some upcoming shows taking a look at different things. We have a new project coming up.

Donna Kshir-

Well, Laurie, if it's okay, I'd like to share some of our current campaigns that have been really successful and a lot of our ambassadors have really come aboard and taken charge, and we are seeing results. Lee, in Florida, actually has an Emergency Food Pantry, we have hosted Awareness Walks. We do Comfort Bears for Law Enforcement agencies. We do a Community Closet for the Keystone Central School District in Pennsylvania. We have a Holiday Smiles Program and we provide Secret Santa toys for children in need or abused children. We do the same at Easter time, for Easter Baskets. We also, we have many programs at the holidays because this has been a tough time for a lot of people right now. This Covid has hit a lot people hard. We have a lot of people in need right now; that really need. It's terrible, we have people who need food and clothes and toys, so we try to really do that. One of our most successful programs was actually our Warming Tree. I think we did over 800 hats, scarves, and gloves and the community, they loved it. But like I said, there were so many people in need, it was a really great

thing. We also do My Body Belongs to Me Campaign and we also do The Sky's the Limit. But in 2021 we have this huge Campaign. I am 150 percent behind it. I am so excited. We had a little boy that had been brutally tortured and killed in our community. When a child is being tortured, you and I both know, there are cries, yells, screams for help. Nobody did anything. Nobody said anything. It was kind of just swept under the rug and let go until after it was too late. Lee and I came together and came up with this program called Community Kids Watch, and what it basically is, is you as a community come together and you see something, you say something. Our biggest thing is we want people to watch, we want people to hear. You know, and if you suspect it, we want you to say something. This campaign is something that I wanted to do for a long time. As you know I have been down for a few years because of an injury. I'm still not 110 percent, and I'll be here and then I won't be, and then I'll be back. It's going to depend on my overall health and how I'm feeling. I'm just stoked for this campaign because I think we really need to promote the fact that if you see something, or you hear something, or you suspect something, you say something. I always say everybody hears this saying where "It takes a village to raise a child" but it also takes a village to protect one. My goal and my hope for this campaign is that we can get people to come together in the community as a whole, we can focus and we can really make a difference in some of these kid's lives. I mean, it's tough right now. We have a lot of kid's right now home-schooling, and let's be honest, some of them are not having meals and some of them are in abusive situations. I mean, these poor kids don't have a chance. As much as I want my own grandchildren at home because I don't want to see them get sick or ill, I mean it's a terrible time right now. You know, school sometimes is a safe haven for children. So, I'm really hoping that this campaign kicks off and people really stand up and take charge. I want people to be as excited about it as I am and Lee is. We're really excited!

Laurie Ann Smith-

Yes, this is awesome! People, you can get involved by going to our website, or you will see our links will be in the description below. You can check our stuff out on our AU4H Facebook page. We are everywhere, like all over the place, like Twitter. We'll be sharing links to this Community Kids Watch Program that's going to be coming up here and if you want to get involved, you know, you contact us. We all need to be involved. I think I'm going to bring sissy Lee on and get a little bit of feedback about this Community Kids Watch Program.

Lee Roberts-

The Community Kids Watch Program is incredibly important. There's something I've said recently as we were working on putting this program together after the tragic loss of a child whose death could have been prevented. You know, it takes a village, we hear this all the time, it takes a village to raise a child, but it's so much more than that. I thought about it, what does that mean? It means that it takes all of us, not just the three of us here. It's every single one of you that are watching, everybody in the community. It takes absolutely all of us to care for and to protect these kids. It doesn't matter whose kids they are kids in the neighborhood, kids who you see out shopping. If you suspect abuse you can make a call in good faith. You are not going to be prosecuted for that. In fact, you may be the only one making a phone call and by you picking up that phone, you could save this child's life. I just know, and it breaks my heart. We've all cried over this so much, the death of this precious child, because it could have been prevented. The extent of his injuries, the extent of the trauma on his little body is evidence that it was going on for some time. Somebody had to hear that little boy scream, to hear him cry, to shout out for help. Nobody

did anything, nobody picked up the phone, nobody called, nobody messaged any local agency whether it be us or the local shelters, anybody. They could have reached out to somebody and said “hey, something is happening to this kid, something is happening, I believe something is happening, please look in on him”, but nobody picked up the phone.

Laurie Ann Smith-

Yes, it’s terrible.

Lee Roberts-

I’ve got to ask all of you out there watching, what if this was somebody you love, what if this was your niece, your nephew, your cousin. I mean, it shouldn’t matter that it’s somebody you love, it’s a child, this is a child. They don’t have the capability; they don’t have the voice that anybody’s listening to. It takes us adults, all of us adults to get together to protect these kids and to speak up for them and to be their voice, and to be their collective voice by protecting them and by looking out. You don’t have to sit there at your window or in your yard and watch kids all the time or something like that. It’s not about invading somebody’s privacy. If you think it’s a privacy issue, it’s not my family, it’s not my problem, but it is your problem. If you see something, you’re out there, you’re doing things, you’re in your yard in your garden, you’re out shopping, you know, you see something, you suspect something it is, whether you are, if you are a mandatory reporter you are absolutely responsible for making a phone call or reporting it online. Even if you are not a mandatory reporter it is a moral obligation for you to protect that child and to pick up that phone and say “hey, I think something’s going on here, somebody needs to check into this”. So, it’s incredibly important it is ensuring that these kids are safe no matter where they are, no matter where they are. Keep an eye out for the kids; keep an eye out for anybody that you don’t recognize in your neighborhood that might be driving around looking for kids. Because I’ll tell you, and I wasn’t planning on sharing this part of my story just yet, but there are people out there that are driving in vans, they are driving in cars and they are looking for children.

Laurie Ann Smith-

Yes, vulnerable children

Lee Roberts-

As a mother whose son is now 40 years old, he went missing when he was 3 years old, took a little walk on his own. Kids are fast, kids are fast. He was potentially going to be taken by a suspected pedophile that police were looking for in the neighborhood, but thankful to God two people intervened and saw somebody in a car with their window down talking to a little boy in the store parking lot. They yelled, he took off and my child was returned to me safely. Once put in my arms they told me that this was probably the suspected pedophile they were looking for. I’m grateful that people were actually looking out and they got involved even back then. People are so afraid to get involved.

Laurie Ann Smith-

Yes, that’s right.

Lee Roberts-

Because they fear repercussions, from legal repercussions; or from other repercussions out there in the community. But I would be grateful for anyone looking out for my, well my son is now grown, so it would be my grandchildren. I'm grateful for any adult out there that keeps their eye out and ensures their safely whether I know who it is or not, I'm thankful for them. It's really, really important. Anson's life could have been saved.

Donna Kshir-

Yes

Lee Roberts-

He should not have died, and we all need to stand up and you know, be ambassadors for the kids and help keep an eye on them. I can't stress the importance of this program. It will take all of us.

Donna Kshir-

Yes

Laurie Ann Smith-

It will.

Lee Roberts-

Back to Laurie or Donna

Laurie Ann Smith-

I'll go.

Lee Roberts-

Whoever is next. For me, it's hard. We are working a little system here, because being Deaf I can't hear what my sister advocates are saying. But we know ahead of time. We've got plans so we are working on it. Whoever wants to jump in here.

Laurie Ann Smith-

I'll jump in. You know it is so important. Children can't protect themselves. This is the reason why Community Kids Watch is so important, because children don't have the ability to protect themselves. It's up to, like Donna was saying and Lee was saying, "it takes a village to raise a child". It's a community issue, it's all our responsibility. It truly really is. I don't have children, but I'm looking out children, because I'm like, they need to be looked out on. I'm keeping an eye open, keeping an ear open because hey, if I hear something, or see something I'm going to report it because you could save a child's life. We've only got 2 minutes left for this show. These half hour shows go pretty quick. We got to hear from Otis. Little Otis is so cute. He is excited and he wants to be on the show. He is so adorable. But yes, we'll have a show coming up here soon, whether we do it as a premiere, but it will be the actual Community Kids Watch program, we'll do an actual show on that and we will talk more about that. So that will be up

and coming, we also have some authors that we will be doing interviews with. That's going to be great. We will have all sorts of stuff. It's not just going to be about child abuse. We are not only just covering child abuse issues, it's just that because this just happened with Anson Stover in Donna Kshir's community, this really hit hard with us because we're child advocates and we work to protect children. This was right in her own community and so Donna, I know, she wanted to do this anyway, but this just pushed it to the forefront. Let's get this program rolling. This is what we're going to do. So we will be coming at you live here again next week and we very well may be talking about that, but don't get the idea that this is only a show about child abuse, because it's not. We are going to be covering all sorts of topics, not just sad ones. We want you to join us. We want you to come back next week. What you do is you look for our scheduled times coming up, you can subscribe to our channel right now if you haven't and you can give us a thumbs up, give us a like if you like the show and share the information. Contact us on our websites, get involved. Just be a voice, share our information, we are a new channel like I said, and we want and need your support. So, I just want to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas however you celebrate it. Not everybody celebrates Christmas. Happy Holidays to those who don't celebrate Christmas. Just have a safe wonderful holiday everybody. I'm just going to sign off here in just a minute. We are just wishing everyone a very safe holiday whatever you are doing. We'll be back next Wednesday before the New Year, so one last show for 2020.

Donna Kshir-

Yes

Laurie Ann Smith-

So, we'll say goodbye then, until next time. I'm glad you could join us.

Lee Roberts-

Have a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Laurie Ann Smith-

That's right, good bye everbody. Until next week. Join us. Bye.

For more information, please see our websites:

Website: https://www.au4h.weebly.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/au4h
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